

# TAC PROTOCOL

The following TAC protocol was adopted by the Task Force and its TAC on October 16, 2001.

## **I. RESEARCH TEAM PRESENTATIONS TO THE TASK FORCE**

Research teams will present to the Task Force in a three step process (this process will occur before or simultaneously to II and III below):

1. Preliminary Findings: preliminary findings from individual studies will be presented as they become available.
2. Interpretation and Integration: preliminary findings will be interpreted and findings from other pertinent studies will be integrated by the research team, and presented to the Task Force.
3. Conclusions: preliminary data, interpretation of that data, and integration with other studies will be summarized by the research team, and conclusions will be presented to the Task Force.

## **II. PROTOCOL FOR FINAL REPORTS**

1. Preliminary Peer Review (draft report): research team leader solicits internal peer review amongst discipline experts; this review process should be documented in draft final and final report.
2. Contractor Review of Deliverable (draft final report): Task Force, Corps, and Park Conservation District study contracts specify deliverable and data release boundaries/guidelines.
3. TAC Peer Review (final final report): TAC reviews interpretation of findings for scientific validity and acceptance **for the Task Force**.

## **III. PROTOCOL FOR PUBLICATIONS**

### **1. Peer Review Journals**

"Normal" protocol for publications should be used. Authors would use an internal or preliminary peer review before going to publication. Review will normally include external peer review for scientific publications.

Accepted manuscripts and copies of final publications should be made available to the TAC.

### **2. Grey Literature (e.g., Governmental Publications and Reports)**

Generally, many governmental publications have extensive internal peer reviews and therefore are treated much like peer-reviewed literature publications.

1. Preliminary Peer Review (draft report): research team leader solicits internal peer review amongst discipline experts.
  2. Agency undergoes external peer review (when appropriate) prior to publication and release.
  3. Furnish a courtesy copy of publication to Task Force, Corps, and Conservation District.
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The following clarification comments were made at the September 27, 2001 Task Force meeting:

- Research Team Presentations to Task Force – Task Force plays a key role in this stage, providing feedback and asking questions that the preliminary findings should address.
- Protocols for Publications – Task Force and TAC do not play a role in this stage, the scientific community is involved.
- Protocol for Final Reports – this is a peer review stage; the contractor has control over deliverables; TAC reviews interpretation of findings.
- Protocol For Final Reports – at this stage it is too late for the Task Force to give comment; comment must come in Stage I.
- Can the contractor (Corps and/or Park Conservation District) hold back payment if the Task Force does not agree with product?

Response: The Corps would withhold payment if the deliverable were unacceptable as specified in the contract. The District would take their lead from the Task Force and would base their decision on the deliverable specified in the contract. Contract deliverables are based on Task Force-approved research proposals.

- Research Team Presentations to Task Force – in this stage, dialogue is encouraged when preliminary findings are presented to the Task Force.